

United States Arsenal Powder Magazine
(now Porter Academy Armory)
167 Ashley Avenue (Ashley Avenue, Bee,
Doughty and President Streets)
Charleston
Charleston County
South Carolina

HABS No. SC-298

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PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
Eastern Office, Design and Construction
143 South Third Street
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

HABS No. SC-298

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Address: 167 Ashley Avenue (Ashley Avenue, Bee, Doughty, and President Streets), Charleston, Charleston County, South Carolina.

Present Owner: Medical College of South Carolina, 16 Lucas Street, Charleston, South Carolina.

Present Occupant: Porter Academy.

Present Use: Educational.

Brief Statement of Significance: A mid-19th century military building.

PART 1. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

- A. Original and Subsequent Owners: United States Government; granted to Trustees of the Holy Communion Church Institute by joint resolution of Congress, December 19, 1879. Name changed to Porter Academy in 1886. (A. Toomer Porter, Led On [New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1898]). Sold to Medical College of South Carolina, August 30, 1963. (News and Courier, Charleston, South Carolina, August 31, 1963).
- B. Date of Erection: About 1844.
- C. Architect: Probably Edward Brickell White. (Ravenel, Architects of Charleston [Charleston: Carolina Art Ass'n., 1945]).
- D. Notes on Known Alterations and Additions: Converted into double swimming pool c. 1881. (A. Toomer Porter, Led On [New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1898]). Later adapted for use as an armory, with installation of an elevated plank floor [physical evidence].
- E. Sources of Information: A. Toomer Porter, Led On (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1898). News and Courier, Charleston, South Carolina, August 31, 1963. Ravenel, Architects of Charleston (Charleston: Carolina Art Ass'n., 1945).

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement

1. Architectural character: An interesting representative of its type, with an unusual brick arch over the entrance.
2. Condition of fabric: Structure; sound. Finish; fair.

B. Technical Description of Exterior

1. Number of stories, over-all dimensions, layout:
One story; about 36' x 40'; polygonal layout--shape.
2. Foundations: Low.
3. Wall construction, finish, and color: Red brick, 10-1/2" thick, American bond. Four courses are 1'-1" high, covered with ivy.
4. Structural system, framing: Bearing walls on exterior; two rows of three brick piers each, 1'-8" x 2'-0", support 12" x 8" heavy timber trussed girders, which support the central part of the roof.
5. Stoops: Modern concrete steps at entrance (five risers).
6. Openings; doorways and doors: Entrance is centered on south front; it is an arched Palladian-like motif, with a small barred window on each side of the door. Brick voussoirs near crown radiate, but remaining ones all slope at a 45° angle--they continue thus over the two window heads. The door, probably not original, is board-and-batten covered with a steel sheet. A barred transom is now closed by matched and beaded boarding.
7. Roof:
 - a. Shape, covering: Hip roof covered with standing-seam sheet metal, painted red.
 - b. Eaves: formed by projecting rafter ends.

C. Technical Description of Interior

1. Floor plans: There is a single open space inside; the shape is that of a Greek cross, with the interior corners occupied by polygonal bays. Within this area, on axis with the entrance is a central rectangle about 22' x 28' occupied by a raised platform whose boundaries are formed by piers which support the roof. A lower area extends around the perimeter.

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2. Flooring: (Not original). Heavy planks--2-1/2" x 8".
 3. Wall and ceiling finish: Open roof construction, showing rafters and sheathing boards. Walls and piers are plastered.
- D. Site: The building faces south; it is one of a group which occupies an entire block; it is near the center of the block, being just north of the main driveway, and just west of the main building.

Prepared by Harley J. McKee, Architect
National Park Service
August 1963.